

In the Claims:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled).

17. (New) A method for preventing staining of tissue when a wound dressing containing silver is used to cover a wound comprising applying to a wound a wound dressing comprising an anionic, amphoteric or hydrophilic polymer, and an effective amount of silver, which dressing, when placed in water gives a release of ionic silver into water of less than 1 ppm when measured after five hours, and when in contact with wound exudate, gives a controlled release of ionic silver into the wound exudate.
18. (New) A method for maintaining an effective antimicrobial activity within a wound dressing throughout the wear time of the dressing comprising applying to a wound a wound dressing comprising an anionic, amphoteric or hydrophilic polymer, and an effective amount of silver, which dressing, when placed in water gives a release of ionic silver into water of less than 1ppm, and when in contact with wound exudate, gives a controlled release of ionic silver into the wound exudate.
19. (New) The method of claim 17 wherein the anionic, amphoteric or hydrophilic polymer of the wound dressing is selected from the group consisting of polysaccharides, modified polysaccharides, polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyvinyl alcohols, polyvinyl ethers, polyurethanes, polyacrylates, polyacrylamides, collagen, gelatin and mixtures thereof.
20. (New) The method of claim 17 wherein the wound dressing is in the form of fibers, or a powder or distributed within a matrix of an adhesive.
21. (New) The method of claim 17 wherein the wound dressing comprises from 0.1% to 20% by weight of silver.
22. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein the anionic, amphoteric or hydrophilic polymer of the wound dressing is selected from the group consisting of polysaccharides, modified polysaccharides, polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyvinyl

alcohols, polyvinyl ethers, polyurethanes, polyacrylates, polyacrylamides, collagen, gelatin and mixtures thereof.

23. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein the wound dressing is in the form of fibers, or a powder or distributed within a matrix of an adhesive.
24. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein the wound dressing comprises from 0.1% to 20% by weight of silver.